

REMARKS

This submission is directed to Office Correspondence of mail date 02/09/2006.

Summarizing the state of the claims herein, claims 1-6 are canceled, claim 7 is amended and pending, claims 8-26 are pending, claims 27-30 are allowed, claims 31-33 are canceled, claim 34 is amended and pending, claims 35-40 are pending and claims 41-48 are canceled.

In the cited office correspondence, the Examiner required new drawings, which the Applicant has included herein.

The Examiner required the petition for color drawings to be completed by amendment to the specification, which the Applicant has included herein.

The Examiner has allowed claims 27-30, because the prior art of record does not suggest the additional step of monitoring the quality of said joint for voids in the adhesive, and adjusting at least one joint formation parameter whereby said voids in the adhesive between the joined fabric layers are eliminated and avoided, said joint formation parameters comprising a group including adhesive film thickness, fabric layer weave openness, adhesive heating temperature, pressure applied to the joint during formation, a time that the adhesive is maintained near its melting point, and a time that pressure is applied to the fabric layers.

The Examiner rejected claims 7-26, 31-32 and 34-40 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over applicant's admitted prior art (AAPA), see paragraphs 0003-0006, in view of Bebber (US 2002/0016118). The Examiner alleges the AAPA to disclose a method for joining at least two fabric layers, comprising the steps of: providing at least two fabric layers (paragraph 0005); saturating the facing surfaces with an adhesive (such as urethane, see paragraph 00045), and applying heat and pressure to the fabric layers (paragraph 0005). The Examiner notes that no independent description of what constitutes optimal thickness or what this step actually means in claim 7. The Examiner concludes that the method in the AAPA is inherently bonded to a predetermined optimal thickness.

Applicant herein amends claim 7 and respectfully traverses the rejection. According to the MPEP §2143.01, "[o]bviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the

teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found in either the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art." Claim 7 as amended requires a measurement of the original fabric thickness, and a determination of a desired final joint thickness taking into consideration the application and the joint properties most important to the application, all as described in the specification as at paragraph 0038, for example. The joining process is then controlled or terminated when the desired thickness is achieved. Applicant asserts the rejection to have been overcome, as there is no teaching, suggestion or motivation in the cited references or knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art leading to the amended claims. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes claims 8-26 to be dependent on and be further limitations to what is argued to be allowable amended claim 7, and asserts without prejudice that these claims are therefore allowable for at least this reason. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration.

Applicant has herein canceled claims 31- 33.

The Examiner rejected claim 34 on similar grounds as claim 7 above, saying that the AAPA discloses a method for joining at least two fabric layers, comprising the steps of: providing at least two fabric layers (paragraph 0005); saturating the facing surfaces with an adhesive (such as urethane, see paragraph 00045), and applying heat and pressure to the fabric layers (paragraph 0005), and noting that there is no independent description of what constitutes optimal density or what this step actually means in claim 34, and that therefore, the method in the AAPA, is inherently bonded to a predetermined optimal thickness.

Applicant herein amends claim 34 and respectfully traverses the rejection. Claim 34 as amended requires a measurement of the original fabric density, and a determination of a desired final joint density taking into consideration the application and the joint properties most important to the application, all as described in the specification as at paragraph 0033, for example. The joining process is then controlled or terminated when the desired thickness is achieved. Applicant refers to its comments above and asserts the rejection to have been overcome. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicant notes claims 35-40 to be dependent on and further limitations to what is argued to be allowable amended claim 34, and asserts without prejudice that these claims are therefore likewise allowable for at least this reason. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration.

Claims 41-48 are canceled.

Applicant believes the above amendments and remarks to be fully responsive to the Office Action, thereby placing this application in condition for allowance. No new matter is added. Applicant requests speedy reconsideration, and further requests that Examiner contact its attorney by telephone, facsimile, or email for quickest resolution, if there are any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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